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Message Text

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60
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

TRSE-00 ACDA-07 IO-13 /077 W
---------- 080804
R 021010Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9766

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 4254

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SA, YE, IS
SUBJECT: SAUDI CONCERN AT PLANE OVERFLIGHTS OF NORTH YEMEN

REF: JIDDA 7781

1. WE SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT YAR MESSAGE PRESAGES ANY NEAR-TERM PUSH FOR HAWKS. NEITHER YAR LEADERSHIP NOR LOCAL SAUDI MILITARY CONTACTS HAVE EVER SURFACED THE IDEA OF ACQUIRING US AIR DEFENSE MISSILES IN THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH US REPRESENTATIVES. WHILE YEMENI APPETITES FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT ARE LARGE, WE BELIEVE THEY REALIZE THAT SUCH WEAPONS ARE WELL BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THE INITIAL SAUDI FIVE-YEAR PLAN FOR YAR ARMED FORCES MODERNIZATION. AT THE SAME TIME IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT YEMENIS MAY USE THIS INCIDENT AS A MEANS OF URGING AGAIN EARLIER DELIVERY OF EQUIPMENT ALREADY CONTRACTED, PARTICULARLY THE VULCAN ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS WHICH CARRY A 31-MONTH LEAD-TIME FROM NORMAL PROCUREMENT.

2. AS FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ISRAELI ROLE, YARG HAS GIVEN US NO INDICATION THAT IT VIEWED THE PROBLEM IN THIS LIGHT, ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN SOME RUMORS TO THIS EFFECT IN SANA. SENIOR YEMENI OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN
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INCREASINGLY CONCERNED OVER RECENT TRENDS IN ETHIOPIA,

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ESPECIALLY IN THE WAKE OF RECENT LOW-LEVEL CONFRONTATIONS IN THE RED SEA SUCH AS THE FISHING BOAT INCIDENT LAST AUGUST. WE BELIEVE THEY ARE LIKELY TO PUT THE BLAME FOR THIS LATEST AIRCFAFT INCIDENT ON ETHIOPIA AS MORE INFORMATION COMES TO LIGHT, ESPECIALLY IF IT APPEARS THAT AMERICAN-MANUFACTURED ORDANCE WAS USED (THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR HAS ALREADY INFORMED US THAT US MAKRING WERE FOUND ON THE BOMB RECENTLY DROPPED.)

3. AT PRESENT, HOWEVER, LOCAL ATMOSPHERE IS QUITE CALM AS YEMENI CIVILIAN AND MILITARY OFFICIALDOM IS TOTALLY ENGROSSED IN EID AL-ADHA CELEBRATIONS. ON BASIS OF PAST PERFORMANCE, WE FEEL SURE THAT YEMENIS WILL INFORM US IMMEDIATELY IF THEY THINK THERE IS SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO CONNECT RECENT AIRCRAFT VIOLATIONS WITH A US-SUPPLIED FORCE, WHETHER ETHIOPIAN OR ISRAELI.
SCOTES

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